

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A ~~[[P]]~~process for the production of granules ~~or pellets~~ containing filamentous fungi comprising the steps of:
selecting and growing filamentous fungi in a suitable culture medium for a predetermined amount of time,
mixing said culture medium, after said predetermined time, with a gelling agent and at least one carrier material, so as to obtain a mixture,
subjecting said mixture to gelling through drop by drop contact, with a solution containing a calcium salt thus obtaining gelled ~~pellets or~~ granules containing said filamentous fungi, and
drying said gelled ~~pellets or~~ granules to a moisture content of 13-18%.
2. (Currently amended) The ~~[[P]]~~process according to claim 1, wherein said gelling step is carried out by adding said mixture, drop by drop, into said solution containing a calcium salt.
3. (Currently amended) The ~~[[P]]~~process according to claim 1, wherein said culture medium for filamentous fungi comprises at least one carbon source ~~chosen among~~ selected from the group consisting of molasses, malt extract and sucrose and at least one organic nitrogen source ~~chosen between~~ selected from the group consisting of yeast extract and ~~[[“]]~~corn steep liquor~~[[”]]~~.
4. (Currently amended) The ~~[[P]]~~process according to claim 3, wherein said at least one carbon source constitutes between 70 and 85% by weight of the dry weight of the culture medium and said at least one organic nitrogen source constitutes between 15 and 30% by weight of the dry weight of the culture medium.

5. (Currently amended) The ~~[[P]]~~process according to claim 3, wherein said culture medium further comprises a mineral nitrogen source.

6. (Currently amended) The ~~[[P]]~~process according to claim 4, wherein said mineral nitrogen source is contained in an amount not greater than 10% by weight of the dry weight of the culture medium ~~and preferably between 5 and 8% by weight.~~

7. (Currently amended) The ~~[[P]]~~process according to claim 1, wherein the gelling agent consists of a solution containing between 1 and 2% by weight of sodium alginate.

8. (Currently amended) The ~~[[P]]~~process according to claim 7, wherein said sodium alginate solution is added to the culture medium of the filamentous fungus ~~preferably~~ according to a culture medium/alginate solution volume ratio of between 40:60 and 60:40.

9. (Currently amended) The ~~[[P]]~~process according to claim 1, wherein said carrier~~[[s]]~~ material is selected ~~are chosen~~ from the group ~~comprising~~ consisting of diatom earth, ~~preferably Celaton FPM 0-08, flours, preferably cornflour, and sugars, and combinations thereof.~~

10. (Currently amended) The ~~[[P]]~~process according to claim 9, wherein said filamentous fungi are of *Arthrobotrys conoides* Dreschsler and said ~~carriers~~ carrier material comprises at least cornflour.

11. (Currently amended) The ~~[[P]]~~process according to claim 9, wherein the ~~carriers~~ are carrier material is added to the sodium alginate solution in percentages ranging between 6% and 22% by weight of the weight of the solution.

12. (Currently amended) The ~~[[P]]~~process according to claim 1, wherein the solution containing a calcium salt is ~~preferably~~ an aqueous calcium chloride or calcium gluconate solution having a concentration of 0.2-0.3 M.

13. (Currently amended) The ~~[[P]]~~process according to claim 1, wherein the dried granules ~~or pellets~~ have an average diameter of between 1 and 3 mm. .

14. (New) The process according to claim 6, wherein said mineral nitrogen source is contained in an amount between 5 and 8% by weight of the dry weight of the culture medium.

15. (New) The process according to claim 9, wherein said flours include cornflour.